



Election Modernization Committee

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Conducted by Remote Participation

Meeting Notes

Attendance: Greg Dennis, Juli Brazile, Maxwell Palmer, Walter Horn, Giovanna DeStefanis, Patti Muldoon, Paul Parravano, Adam Badik, Jennifer Susse, Len Diggins, Bill Logan

1. Executive Order on Remote Participation

Greg reviewed the executive order. Len reported that the link on the calendar event was not working so the public is not able to attend. This makes the meeting non-compliant under Open Meeting Law. No votes will be taken and we will publish meeting notes, but not formal minutes.

2. Draft Minutes for Review, Edits, and Approval - Tue, Oct 19, 2021

The October minutes were reviewed and there were no corrections.

3. Status of Home Rule Petitions

Greg reported that both petitions are still pending. Sean will follow up with the chair of the Elections Committee. We need approval on both petitions in very early January so we know if we are implementing the Town Meeting elections in precincts not impacted by reprecincting. We need to know if people have to run for specific races or not. Technically, the RCV petition could be approved later and still leave the Select Board time to put the question on the ballot. Several members said they would contact Sean, Dave or Cindy to try and get this moving.

Patti reports [H. 4207 is the new bill number for RCV petition.](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/H4207/BillHistory)

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4. Youth Voting Engagement

Giovanna reports the sub-committee was not able to meet so there is no update. She spoke with students active in the anti-racism group and they felt the timing was bad for email outreach to engage more students when juniors and seniors are distracted by college applications. They plan to engage students in early January. Jennifer notes the deadline to file a warrant article is the end of January, although that only needs to be a very short outline of the proposal. Giovanna agreed to try now to start collecting names with a follow up in January.

5. Accessible Electronic Remote Voting System Pilot

Our letter to Secretary Galvin referenced AutoMark machines for voting in person, however there are more considerations for accessible voting. In 2020, the State allowed accessible vote by mail (AVBM), but it wasn't user friendly. Since then, a company called Democracy Live has entered the space. Online ballots were offered in Cambridge, Watertown, Boston and Quincy this November. Voters request an absentee ballot, indicate they are visually impaired, receive a link and pin via email, use that to access the ballot and use their own equipment to complete the ballot and return it. Paul heard good things. Juli reported she will contract with Democracy Live and the \$3000 expense has been approved by the Town Manager for the April 2022 town election.

Michelle Tassinari told Paul that Elections is looking to replace the AutoMark. The Disability Law Center (DLC) worked on this year's project and may partner with EMC to continue lobbying the Secretary of State. Greg reports MA has money in the Help America Vote Act from 2004 and it has not been spent. Paul will talk to the DLC attorney about that money and funding sources. Patti thinks we should research whether Galvin or Baker is sitting on the funds to either support AVBM or new voting systems.

Adam wonders if we can ask the Select Board to apply to use the money. We should take action, for Arlington and other communities. One question is whether any Town has ever applied for money. We could ask for reimbursement for the new tabulators we used last year. Or the cost

of the poll pads that Juli has made a capital request to purchase for every precinct.

Can the Town Clerks Association (MTCA) approach Galvin on the issue of trying to get access to the money? Greg thinks the fund holds \$40 million. Juli can email the MTCA president to ask how MTCA decides on issues to pursue. We could propose that all Towns get funding for services like Democracy Live, which would have broad appeal.

Cost of all election equipment is likely to go up as electronics become obsolete more quickly now. Greg wonders if Galvin could also negotiate bulk rates on the purchase of the approved voting machines.

Juli will send a link to a Democracy Live video and general link for more information so Greg can share it with the committee.

6. Public Comment and/or Questions

No one from the public

7. New Business

Juli - Select Board will choose a final precinct map on November 22. There will be a final vote the following week to confirm the entire package of materials the State will prepare based on the map.

Adam - guy from Japan can't access the SOC website. The IP address is blocked. Curious to know what's going on.

Patti - wants to know who knows how to ask for improvements to the state website. Greg knows the guy who created election results reporting software and gets paid for the State because they use his software on their website. Find a vendor to pitch the state on offering new tools.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm

Next meetings December 7 and January 11